Make your dumpster bear-resistant

MyFWC.com/Bear

Bear Management Program

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends people keep their dumpsters secure from bears. The best way to accomplish this is to use a commercially manufactured bear resistant dumpster that is specifically designed and certified to keep bears out. If this is not an option, you may modify your dumpster to make it more bear-resistant. If your dumpster is owned by a service provider, you MUST get their permission before any modifications can be made. The methods described below work on a variety of 2- to 8-yard dumpster designs (see step 5 to secure sliding side doors on 8-yard dumpsters). The dimensions of your dumpster may influence construction materials needed.

Please review 'Alternative Modifications' at the end of this packet to ensure you are selecting the best modification option for your dumpster.

NOTE: Some waste service companies do not allow drivers to exit vehicles when servicing dumpsters, so you may need to unlatch modified dumpster lids the day of pick-up or request a security bar from your provider that does not require manual manipulation.

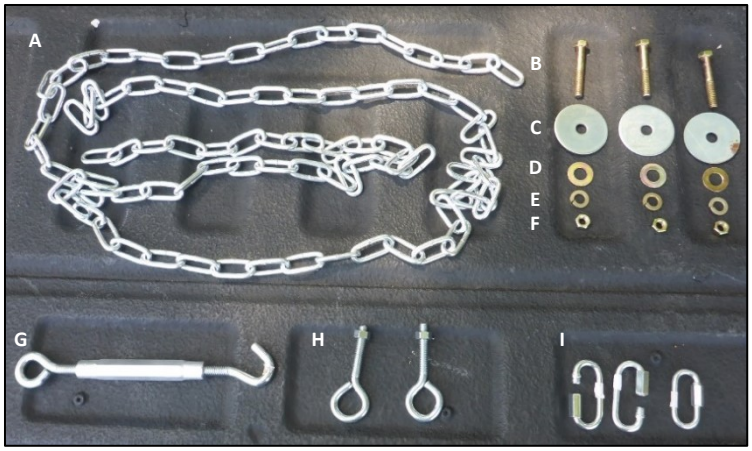
Tools Needed:

A) Cable cutters
B) Tin snips (or other plastic cutting tool)
C) Power drill
D) Socket
E) Marker
F) Drill bit (1/4" pictured)
G) Measuring tape
H) 2 wrenches (of any combination) ratcheting socket, adjustable crescent or appropriately-sized combination wrench (1/4" pictured)
Not pictured: Appropriate tool for cutting bracing material, such as a hand saw, hack saw, or cutting power tool.

Materials Needed

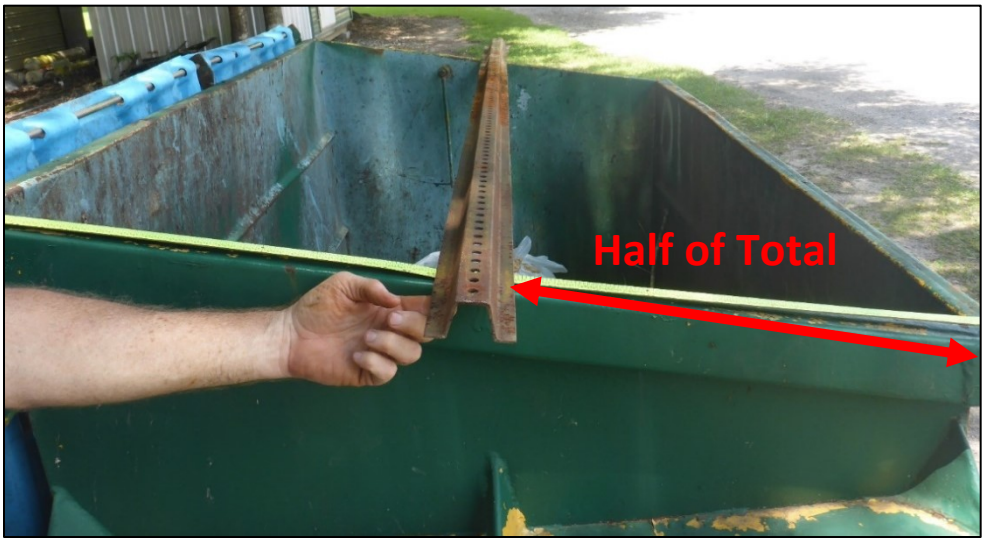
To prevent bears from collapsing the dumpster's lid, bracing material that spans the opening of the dumpster with 6" overhang on each side must be bolted to the lid. Suitable bracing material options include a bed rail, U-post, angle iron, 2"x4" lumber, square tube steel, or similar sturdy material. Bolts must be long enough to go through the lid and bracing material, then secured by a washer and nut. *In our example, we used a 10 ' U-post and 2 ½" long bolts. Adjust bolt length as needed.*

A) 1-10' link chain (520 lb medium duty pictured)
B) 3 – Bolts (1/4" X 2½" pictured)
C) 3 – Fender washers (2" pictured)
D) 3 – Washers (to fit 1/4" bolt pictured)
E) 3 – Lock washers or lock nuts (1/4" pictured)
F) 3 – Nuts (lock nuts not used, 1/4" pictured)
G) 1 – Hook & eye turnbuckle (1/4" X 7½" pictured)
H) 2- Eye bolts with nuts (1/4" x 2½" pictured)
I) 3 – Quick links (2" pictured)
Pictured in Step 1: 10' U-post bracing material
Pictured in Step 5: Materials to secure sliding side doors on 8-yard dumpsters



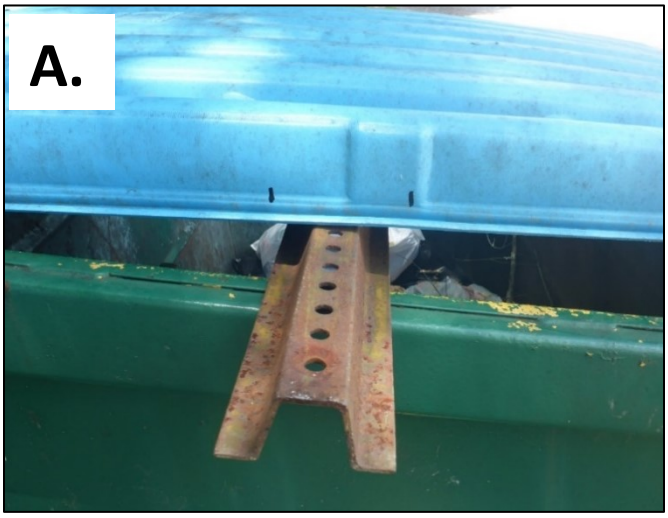
Step 1: Position bracing material

Position the bracing material (U-post pictured) on the dumpster half-way between the back of the dumpster (where the lid hinges) and the front. Ensure that the bracing material hangs 6" past the edge of the dumpster on both sides.



Step 2: Cut lid to accommodate bracing material

Lids need to be flush with the dumpster body to prevent bears from gaining access to garbage.



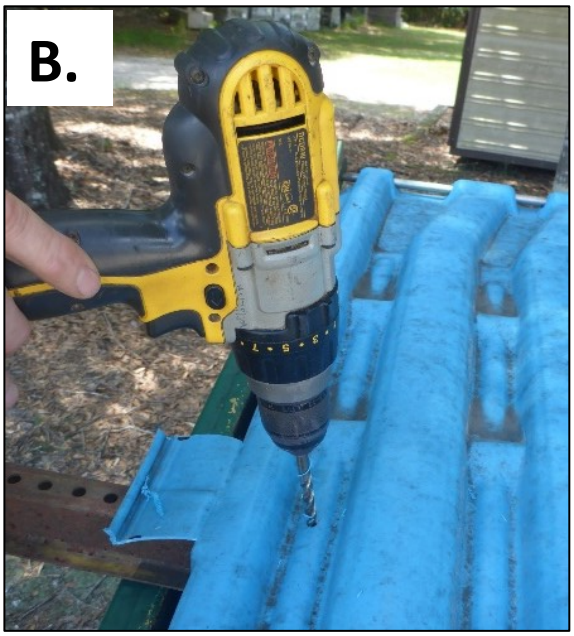
A) Mark both edges of lid on either side of bracing material. Repeat on second lid.

B) Cut the lid to accommodate the height of the bracing material with tin snips or other cutting tools.

Step 3: Secure one lid to bracing material

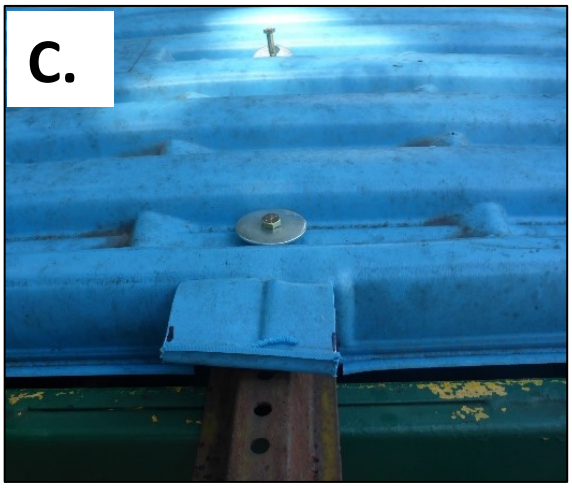
Bolt the bracing material to one lid so waste can easily be discarded through the unbolted side of the of the dumpster without having to lift the weight of the bracing material. However, for larger waste items, both lids and the attached bracing material must be lifted.

A) Securely bolt the bracing material to the lid in 3-4 evenly spaced locations. Fasten bolts to the trough (not the peaks) of the ridges to prevent the lid from flattening or deforming against the bracing material.



B) Drill pilot holes in the lid to create attachment points for the bracing material.

NOTE: If using material without prefabricated holes, drill pilot holes through both lid and bracing material.

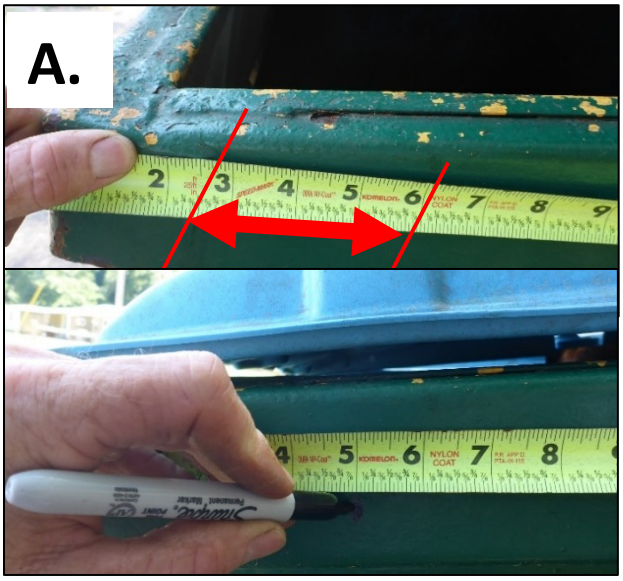


C) Install bolts with large fender washers through the lid and bracing material.

D) Place a small washer, lock washer and nut on each bolt on the underside of the lid and bracing material. Use a wrench to tighten bolts.

Step 4: Attach locking mechanism for lids

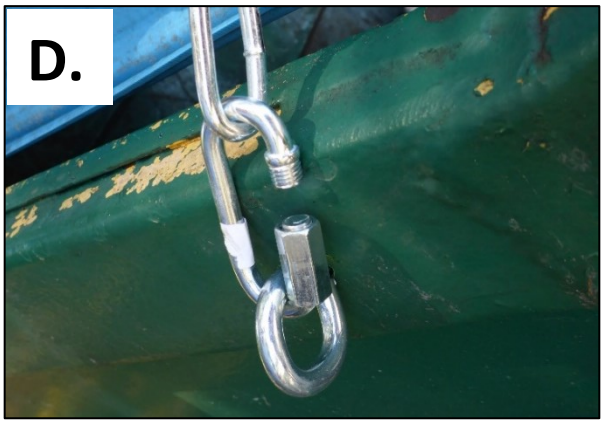
Once the brace is secured, a locking mechanism must be installed to prevent bears from opening the dumpster's lid. If renting a security locking bar (pictured below) from your waste service provider is not possible, FWC recommends using a durable (≥ 500-lb strength) chain secured to each side of the dumpster and a turnbuckle to tighten the chain to prevent bears from peeling lids open.



A) *On each side of the dumpster, measure 3" from the inner edge of the front of the dumpster and mark the points where the chain will fasten (somewhere between 4 and 6" from the front).*

B) Drill holes at the marked locations for placement of the eyebolts.

C) *Install each eyebolt with the loop facing outward and secure the other end with a lock nut or washer.*



D) *Use a quick link to attach one end of the chain to the loop of the eyebolt. Finger tighten the quick link closed to secure the chain.*

E) Extend the chain across the front of the lid and in line with the eyebolt on the opposite side.

F) *In the center of the lid that is not attached to the bracing material, connect the eye side of the turnbuckle to the chain using a quicklink.*

G) Cut the chain at the link immediately to the right of the quicklink attachment.

H) With the turnbuckle fully extended, hook the chain over the lid to the chain connected to the eyebolt on the opposite side of the dumpster. Leave enough chain so that the turnbuckle will rest flat on the lid with just enough slack for your thumb to fit between the lid and turnbuckle.

I) Tighten the turnbuckle until the chain is firmly holding the lids closed. You should not be able to make a gap between the lid and the dumpster when you try to lift the lid.

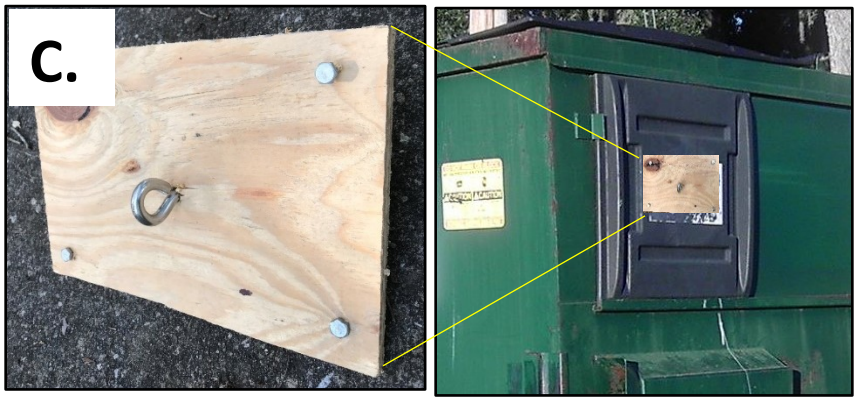
To open the lid, loosen the turnbuckle until there is enough slack to unhook the hook end of the turnbuckle from the chain. It is important to use these new security features EVERYDAY to keep bears from accessing your dumpster.

Step 5: Secure the sliding side doors (8-yard dumpsters only)

The 8-yard capacity dumpsters have sliding doors on the sides that are just as important to secure as the lids on top. Make sure that the short chain you use to secure the sliding door to the body of the dumpster does not allow the door to open at all. The instructions below address dumpsters with both metal and plastic sliding doors and dumpsters with or without attachment points on the body of the dumpster.

A) If the dumpster has metal sliding doors and attachment points on both the doors and the body of the dumpster, attach a short chain and clip to secure the sliding doors closed when not in use.

B) If the dumpster has metal sliding doors with handles, but there are no attachment points on the body of the dumpster, you can add an eyebolt to the dumpster body. First, drill a pilot hole into the front corners of the dumpster body near the sliding doors. Place an eyebolt using a washer and nut to secure on the inside. Attach a short chain and clip to the door handles on the sliding doors and the eyebolt on the dumpster body to keep the doors closed whenever they are not in use.



C) If the dumpster has plastic sliding doors, bolt a small piece of plywood onto each sliding door, and fasten an eyebolt to the center of the plywood to act as the attachment point. If the body of the dumpster does not have an attachment point, see B) above. Attach a short chain and clip to the eyebolt on the sliding door to connect it to the dumpster body to keep the doors closed when not in use.

FWC encourages people to try modifications and variations on these designs and if they work, please contact us via BearManagement@MyFWC.com. Some variations on the above designs include:

Alternative 1: Use metal bracing material with flat ends

Rather than using a U-post or 2" x 4" board, you may use a standard metal bedframe or similar metal material where the ends are flat. This eliminates the need to cut the plastic dumpster lids. If you choose this alternative, you can follow all other steps listed above.

Alternative 2: Attach bracing material on outside of lids

Rather than bolting bracing material on the underside of the lid, you can place a sheet of plywood across the top of both lids and then secure the lids as described in the steps above. You would not need to bolt anything directly to the lids, but you would have to take the plywood on and off each time you use the dumpster.

Alternative 3: Attach pipe and bracing material along the lids

Rather than bolting bracing material on the underside of the lid, you can place a few boards or metal bars along the grooves of the lid to reinforce the top. If a security bar is present, you can attach it to a PVC pipe, which allows the bar to clamp down more tightly on the lids. This prevents the need to bolt anything to the lids or the sides of the dumpster. However, you will have to take the boards or metal bars off each time you use the dumpster, and before it is serviced. None of the instructions above apply to this alternative.